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guide, which is attuned to the harmony of nature, he will find his pupils growing into an appreciation of what is meant by reading aloud.

The days of definitions first and illustrations afterward, and no sense in either, are waning. Up to date we have had, in the public schools of this country, what might be properly called the vocal utterance of words! It is high time that we should have some reading. I therefore hail the appearance of this little book with a sense of pleasure, and bid it Godspeed on its mission of grace to the five hundred thousand teachers who may be helped by its study, and the sixteen million children who need its ministrations.

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Studies in Literature and Composition. By W. H. SKINNER, Superintendent of Schools, Nebraska City, Neb. Lincoln, Neb.: J. H. Miller. \$1.00.

PERSONS at all acquainted with the literature work in the University of Nebraska know that it is original if nothing more. Those whose interest has led them to inquire into the results there obtained in the cultivation of a taste for pure literature have felt that the work must be founded upon a right basis. The writer is one who, after having condemned as a fine-spun theory any such scientific laboratory method of teaching literature, has been glad not only to praise but also to make use of the method. That he is one of many to do the latter is evidenced by the general use of the Shakespeare pamphlets of Dr. Sherman, the originator of the method referred to.

The author of the present volume asks for no credit as to originality of principles. He claims for his book only that it is an attempt to adapt to the needs of secondary schools the university methods spoken of. He has long been a student of the methods, and for several years has been applying them in all the lower grades of school work. This book is the outgrowth of his experiments.

The first thing that will attract most teachers is the illustrations. Believing that the arts of painting and of literature are closely allied and that the appreciation of the one necessitates to a degree the appreciation of the other, the author has introduced reproductions of several famous paintings, giving in connection with each a "study," or series of questions designed to bring out the spirit and purpose of the artist.

This same plan is pursued throughout the book. Extracts from many authors are introduced, each accompanied by inductive questions aiming to show exactly what the writer is trying to make the reader feel, and to show the art, the methods, by which he accomplishes his purpose. To answer these questions the student will continually be required to put himself into the environment and feelings of others, to think and feel as others think and feel. What such work will do for the student needs no demonstration.

Besides somewhat complete studies of De Amicis, Dr. John Watson, and several prominent American authors, there are briefer treatments of a score of writers, as well as chapters on emphasis, tone quality, historical decrease in predication and in sentence length, the emotional quality of words and phrases, figures of speech, etc., each accompanied with "studies." The last chapter mentioned is one of decided interest, as it treats especially of the spiritual meaning of figures. Although hardly so clear as it might be, it will come as a revelation to many a high-school student that has worried over the rhetorical names of figures without seeing any reason under the sun for their use; for even such students *feel* that the rhetorics are far astray when they say that "figures are used for ornament."

In parts the book is not what one wishes it were. The author has done so much that it seems as though he could have gone a little further in not a few places, could have made the work much easier for both teacher and student. Taken as a whole, however, it seems sure to mark an epoch in secondary school work in literature.

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A Brief History of the English Language. By OLIVER FARRAR EMERSON, A.M., PH.D. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1896. Pp. x + 265.

PROFESSOR EMERSON'S *History of the English Language* was so well received that it is not remarkable that he should have been led to prepare a more elementary book on the subject. The earlier work was designed for colleges and for teachers of English, but such is the state of scholarship in our country just at present that not a few for whom it was intended may have found the book rather advanced. However this may be, there were the secondary schools in which the book, as it